A SCRIPTURAL INSTRUCTION MANUAL

Book Two

THE ONENESS OF GOD

AND THE IDENTITY OF

JESUS CHRIST

The Foundation of All That Follows

"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Colossians 2:9

Established Upon the Authority of Holy Scripture

King James Version

Preface: Why This Question Cannot Be Avoided

The question of who God is stands at the center of all theology. Every doctrine in the Christian faith depends, ultimately, on the correct answer to this question. Salvation, baptism, prayer, worship, the name invoked at conversion, the Person in whom faith is placed — all of these are shaped by the answer. A student who constructs a theology of salvation without first

settling the question of God's identity is building on an unexamined foundation. This book exists to examine that foundation.

The doctrine taught in this volume is known as Oneness theology or Apostolic Oneness: the conviction that God is absolutely one — not a Trinity of three co-equal, co-eternal persons — and that Jesus Christ is the full, bodily manifestation of that one God, in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead (Colossians 2:9). This is not a novel doctrine invented in the twentieth century. It is the consistent testimony of the Old Testament, fulfilled and clarified by the New Testament revelation of Jesus Christ.

This book will proceed through seven chapters:

- Chapter One establishes the absolute unity of God from the Old Testament witness.
- Chapter Two traces how that one God was fully revealed in Jesus Christ according to the New Testament.
- Chapter Three examines the specific identity of Jesus Christ — what Scripture declares him to be.
- Chapter Four addresses the most frequently raised objections, including the Trinitarian reading of Matthew 28:19 and the baptism of Jesus, and responds exegetically to each.
- Chapter Five explains why this doctrine matters for everything that follows in this series.
- Chapter Six provides a key terms and technical reference for Greek and Hebrew vocabulary used throughout the book.
- Chapter Seven contains a study guide and review questions for individual study, small group discussion, or classroom instruction.

A Word of Respect

> *The Trinitarian tradition represents the majority position of Christian theology for sixteen centuries. Many sincere, godly believers hold it. This book does not treat Trinitarianism as a wicked or dishonest position. It treats it as a position that cannot withstand careful, contextual, multi-witness examination*

> *of what Scripture actually says. The reader is invited to bring their Bible, their concordance, and the method of Chapter One — and to test every claim made here against the whole counsel of God.*

Chapter One: The Absolute Unity of God

Before the New Testament was written, before the Incarnation, before Pentecost, God had already spoken with unmistakable clarity about his own nature. He is one. Not one among several. Not one expressed in three co-equal persons. Absolutely, indivisibly, irreducibly one. This is the uniform testimony of the entire Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi, and it is the foundation upon which everything the New Testament says about Jesus Christ must be read.

1.1 The Shema: Israel's Foundational Confession

> **Deuteronomy 6:4**
>
> "*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.*"

This verse is the Shema — from the Hebrew shema, meaning 'hear' or 'listen.' It was not merely a theological proposition. It was the defining confession of Israel's national and covenant identity. Every Jewish man recited it twice daily. Christ himself quoted it as the first and greatest commandment (Mark 12:29-30). It was the answer to the polytheism of Egypt, Canaan, Babylon, and Rome. It is the bedrock of biblical monotheism.

The Hebrew Grammar of Deuteronomy 6:4

The Hebrew text reads: Shema Yisra'el Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad. The critical word is echad (אחד), translated 'one.' Trinitarian interpreters sometimes argue that echad can imply a composite unity — as in Genesis 2:24, where a man and woman become 'one flesh' (basar echad). This

reading is possible grammatically, but it does not help the Trinitarian case as much as it might appear.

The composite-unity argument would require the text to already be pointing toward multiple divine persons being united into one. But the Old Testament gives no indication whatsoever that echad is being used to imply plurality within God. When the prophets declare 'there is none beside me' and 'beside me there is no God,' the language is explicitly exclusive of any other divine being, person, or co-equal entity. The Shema's use of echad asserts singularity, not plurality.

Furthermore, if Trinitarian theology is correct, there is a Hebrew word available that more directly conveys absolute mathematical oneness: yachid (יחיד), meaning sole, unique, only. This word is used of Isaac as Abraham's 'only' son (Genesis 22:2). God did not use yachid to describe himself in the Shema. This is sometimes cited as evidence that echad implies compound unity. But the more straightforward reading is that echad, in the context of the entire Old Testament's monotheistic testimony, simply means what it says: God is one.

1.2 The Prophetic Witness

The absolute unity of God is not established in Deuteronomy 6:4 alone.

It is the sustained, repeated, exclusive testimony of the prophets across centuries of divine revelation. The following texts represent the clearest declarations:

> **Isaiah 44:6**
>
> "*Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.*"
>
> **Isaiah 44:8**
>
> "*Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.*"

Isaiah 45:5

"*I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me.*"

Isaiah 45:21--22

"*Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.*"

Isaiah 46:9

"*Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me.*"

The cumulative weight of these declarations is devastating to any theology that introduces a second or third divine person alongside the Father. God himself says 'there is no God beside me,' 'I know not any,' and 'there is none else.' These are not diplomatic or hedged statements.

They are exclusive, absolute declarations of singular identity.

Note that these declarations come from Isaiah — the same prophet who would go on to prophesy the Incarnation (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6). The same God who declares 'there is none beside me' is the God who would later be 'manifest in the flesh' (1 Timothy 3:16). The Old Testament does not set up a trinity to be revealed in the New Testament. It sets up a singularity to be manifested in the New Testament.

1.3 God's Own Self-Designation: I Am

Exodus 3:14

> *"And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."*

The divine name revealed at the burning bush — YHWH, the I AM — is the most significant self-designation in the Old Testament. It is the name above every name, the covenant name of the God of Israel. When Jesus later declares 'Before Abraham was, I am' (John 8:58), he is not accidentally echoing this language. He is explicitly appropriating it.

The crowd's response — they took up stones to kill him for blasphemy (verse 59) — confirms that they understood exactly what he was claiming.

The I AM of Exodus 3:14 and the I AM of John 8:58 are the same. Jesus is not claiming to be a second divine person. He is claiming to be the God of Israel, manifested in human flesh. This will be developed further in Chapter Two.

1.4 The New Testament Confirms, Not Revises, Old Testament Monotheism A common assumption in Trinitarian theology is that the New Testament 'progressively reveals' a more complex doctrine of God than the Old Testament contained — that the Incarnation of the Son and the coming of the Spirit reveal God to be a Trinity of persons that the Old Testament could only dimly perceive. But this reading fails on multiple grounds.

First, the New Testament never explicitly teaches that God is three persons. The word 'Trinity' does not appear in Scripture. The fully developed doctrine of the Trinity — one God in three co-equal, co-eternal, co-substantial persons — was formally codified at the Council of Nicaea (325 AD) and the Council of Constantinople (381 AD), three centuries after the apostolic writings were completed.

Second, the New Testament writers — all of them Jews steeped in Old Testament monotheism — nowhere signal that the revelation of Jesus Christ requires a revision of the absolute unity of God. What they signal, repeatedly, is that the one God of Israel has now been manifested in human flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. The mystery is not 'God is actually three'; the mystery is 'God became a man.'

1 Timothy 3:16

"*And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.*"

Paul calls it the 'mystery of godliness' — not the mystery of the Trinity. The mystery is the Incarnation: the one God of Deuteronomy 6:4 appearing in human form in Jesus Christ. This is what was hidden in ages past and is now revealed (Romans 16:25-26; Colossians 1:26-27).

Key Theological Point

The New Testament does not revise Old Testament monotheism. It fulfills it. The one God of Israel was not revealed to be three persons; he was revealed to have become a person — Jesus Christ.

Chapter Two: The Fullness of God Revealed in Jesus Christ

Having established from the Old Testament that there is one God — absolutely, exclusively, irreducibly one — the New Testament now reveals the manner in which that one God has been manifested to humanity. The answer is Jesus Christ. Not a portion of God. Not a second divine person sent by the Father. The full, complete, bodily manifestation of the one God of Israel.

2.1 Colossians 2:9: The Defining Text

Colossians 2:9

"*For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*"

This is perhaps the single most important Christological statement in the New Testament for the Oneness doctrine. Paul is writing to a church being threatened by a proto-Gnostic philosophy that attempted to interpose intermediate spiritual beings between God and humanity. His response is

categorical: there is no intermediate being. In Christ dwells all (Greek: pan — the whole, the totality, everything) the fullness (pleroma — the complete fullness, nothing lacking) of the Godhead (theotes — the divine nature itself, not a divine attribute or influence) bodily (somatikos — in bodily form, in physical human flesh).

The Greek of Colossians 2:9

> ***Pan (πᾶν) —*** all, the whole, totality — not some, not most, not a third
>
> ***Pleroma (πλήρωμα) —*** fullness, completeness, the full measure of something — nothing omitted
>
> ***Theotes (θεότης) —*** divinity, the divine nature itself — distinct from theiotes (divine quality or attribute)
>
> ***Somatikos (σωματικῶς) —*** bodily, in a bodily manner, in physical human form

Paul does not say 'a portion of the Godhead' or 'one person of the Godhead.' He says all the fullness of the Godhead — the complete divine nature — dwells in Christ, in bodily form. This text alone, if allowed to say what it says, establishes that Jesus Christ is not a second or third divine person alongside the Father. He is the complete manifestation of the one God in human flesh.

The word theotes (used here) is the strongest available Greek term for divinity. Paul chose it deliberately, in contrast to theiotes (Romans 1:20), which refers to divine quality or divine characteristics. Theotes means the divine nature itself, in its totality. All of that — all of God — dwells in Jesus Christ.

2.2 John 1:1--14: The Word Made Flesh

> **John 1:1, 14**

> *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God… And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."*

John's prologue is one of the most carefully constructed theological statements in all of Scripture. The Word (Greek: Logos) was in the beginning, was with God, and was God. Not merely divine; not merely God-like. The Word was God.

The Trinitarian reading of this passage treats 'the Word' as the second person of a Trinity, eternally distinct from the Father. The Oneness reading is more straightforward: the Logos is the eternal, pre-existent expression of the one God — the self-revealing, self-communicating aspect of the divine nature. When the Logos became flesh in Jesus Christ, the one God became a human being. Not a second God. The same God.

The Logos in Jewish and Greek Thought

The concept of the Logos was not unfamiliar to John's audience. In Greek philosophy (particularly Stoicism), the Logos was the rational principle underlying and governing the universe. In Jewish thought (particularly Philo of Alexandria), the Logos was the creative and communicative activity of the one God of Israel — not a separate divine being, but God's own self-expression. John is writing into both of these contexts and declaring: what you call the Logos — the rational principle of the universe, the self-expression of the God of Israel — became a human being. His name is Jesus.

This reading does not require John to be introducing a second divine person. It requires him to be declaring that God himself, in the fullness of his self-expression, took on human nature. This is precisely what 1 Timothy 3:16 calls 'the mystery of godliness': God manifest in the flesh.

2.3 1 Timothy 3:16: God Manifest in the Flesh

> **1 Timothy 3:16**

> "*And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*"

Paul calls this 'without controversy' — homologoumenos in Greek, meaning 'by universal confession,' 'by common agreement.' The Incarnation was not disputed among the first-century churches. What was universally confessed was this: God was manifest in the flesh. Not God the Son. Not the second person of the Trinity. God.

A Textual Note on 1 Timothy 3:16

Some modern translations render this verse 'He who was revealed in the flesh' (NASB, NIV) rather than 'God was manifest in the flesh' (KJV).

This reflects a textual variant: some manuscripts read theos (θεός — God) while others read hos (ὃς — who/he who). The KJV follows the Textus Receptus, which reads theos. The critical text followed by modern versions prefers hos.

Even granting the hos reading for the sake of argument, however, the passage still declares that the subject — whoever 'he' refers to — was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, and received up into glory. This is still the language of divine Incarnation, not the language of a human being uniquely anointed by God. The weight of the surrounding context, and the parallel with other Incarnation texts throughout the Pauline corpus, supports reading the subject as God himself regardless of which textual reading one follows.

2.4 The Father-Son Relationship: Divine and Human

One of the most important theological clarifications in Oneness theology concerns the Father-Son relationship. When Scripture speaks of the Father and the Son, what is it describing?

The Oneness answer is: it is describing the relationship between the eternal divine nature of Christ (the Father — the Spirit of God) and the human nature of Christ (the Son — the flesh he took on at the Incarnation). The Father is not a separate divine person from the Son; the Father is the divine nature dwelling within the human vessel of the Son.

> **John 14:10--11**
>
> "*Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.*"

Christ's language here is not the language of two separate persons standing side by side. It is the language of mutual indwelling — the Father is in Christ, and Christ is in the Father. This is not a description of a relationship between two co-equal divine persons. It is a description of the one God dwelling within the human nature he had assumed.

> **John 10:30**
>
> "*I and my Father are one.*"

The Greek word for 'one' here is hen (ἓν), the neuter form, not the masculine heis. Trinitarian scholars sometimes argue that this shows Jesus is claiming unity of purpose or will rather than unity of being.

But in context, the Jews who heard him immediately took up stones to kill him for blasphemy — because, as they explicitly state in verse 33, they understood him to be claiming to be God. The neuter hen does not diminish the claim. It asserts essential unity: the Father and the Son are one thing, one being, one God.

The Mystery Defined

> *The Father is the eternal Spirit of God — the divine nature. The Son is the human body that the divine nature took on at the Incarnation. The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of God dwelling within*

> *human hearts. These are not three separate persons. They are three modes of the self-revelation of the one God — Father in creation, Son in redemption, Holy Ghost in regeneration.*

Chapter Three: The Identity of Jesus Christ — What Scripture Declares The previous chapters have established that there is one God and that the fullness of that one God dwells in Jesus Christ. This chapter gathers the specific scriptural declarations about who Jesus Christ is — the titles assigned to him, the claims he makes for himself, and the apostolic confession about his identity.

3.1 Isaiah 9:6: The Child Born Is the Mighty God

> **Isaiah 9:6**
>
> "*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*"

This prophecy is universally applied to Jesus Christ in Christian theology — Trinitarian and Oneness alike. The child born, the son given, is the Lord Jesus. Notice what titles are assigned to this child:

- Wonderful Counsellor — a title of divine wisdom and guidance
- The mighty God (El Gibbor) — not a lesser divine being, not a demigod. El is the Hebrew word for God himself. Gibbor means mighty, powerful, warrior. The child to be born is called God.
- The everlasting Father (Abi-Ad) — Father of eternity, or Eternal Father. Not the Son of the Eternal Father. The Eternal Father himself.
- The Prince of Peace — the one who establishes the reign of shalom The Trinitarian interpreter faces a real difficulty here. If Jesus is the second person of the Trinity — the Son, eternally distinct from the Father — why does Isaiah call him 'The everlasting Father'? Trinitarian commentators have offered various explanations: that 'Father' here means 'father-like figure' or 'source of eternity.' But these are explanations required by a

prior theological commitment, not by the plain reading of the text. The text says what it says: the child to be born would be called The everlasting Father. The Oneness reading requires no such explanation. Jesus is the everlasting Father, because the Father — the eternal Spirit of God — is fully dwelling in him.

3.2 The "I Am" Declarations of Jesus

The Gospel of John records seven great 'I Am' declarations of Jesus Christ — statements in which he applies the divine name of Exodus 3:14 to himself. These are not merely rhetorical figures. They are explicit identifications of Jesus with the God of Israel.

- I am the bread of life (John 6:35)
- I am the light of the world (John 8:12)
- I am the door (John 10:9)
- I am the good shepherd (John 10:11)
- I am the resurrection and the life (John 11:25)
- I am the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6)
- I am the vine (John 15:1) But the most significant 'I Am' statement is not one of these seven. It is the absolute, unqualified declaration of John 8:58:

> **John 8:58**
>
> *"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."*

The grammatical structure here is deliberate and striking. 'Before Abraham was' uses the aorist infinitive genesthai (to come into being — a past, completed event). 'I am' uses the present indicative ego eimi — the present tense of continuous being. The contrast is between Abraham's temporal, created existence and Christ's eternal, self-existent being. Jesus does not say 'before Abraham was, I was.' He says 'I am' — the exact form of the divine name of Exodus 3:14.

The audience understood this immediately. Verse 59 records that they took up stones to stone him. Under Mosaic law, blasphemy was a capital offense. They were not confused about what he claimed. They understood that he was claiming to be the I AM — the God of Israel — and they considered it blasphemy. He did not correct their understanding. He claimed it.

3.3 "He That Hath Seen Me Hath Seen the Father"

> **John 14:9**
>
> "*Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?*"

Philip asked to see the Father. Jesus' response is not 'you cannot see the Father because I am not the Father' or 'I can introduce you to the Father.' His response is: you have already seen the Father. You have been looking at him for three and a half years. To see Jesus is to see the Father.

This statement is not compatible with a theology in which Jesus is a second divine person eternally distinct from the Father. If the Father is a distinct person from the Son, then to see Jesus is not to see the Father — it is to see the Son. But Jesus says seeing him is seeing the Father. The Oneness reading is the only reading that makes Jesus' statement straightforwardly true: the Father — the divine nature — is fully present in Jesus, so that seeing Jesus is, in fact, seeing the Father.

3.4 The Apostolic Confession: Lord of All

> **Acts 2:36**
>
> "*Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*"
>
> **Acts 4:12**

> "*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*"
>
> **Philippians 2:9--11**
>
> "*Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*"

The name above every name is Jesus. Not Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as three names. Not a generic divine title. The specific name Jesus — the human name given to the Son of God at the Incarnation (Matthew 1:21) — is the name above every name, the name in which salvation resides (Acts 4:12), the name into which baptism is administered (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5).

This exaltation of the name of Jesus is not the exaltation of a second divine person over the first. It is the declaration that the one God of Israel has fully revealed himself in human form in Jesus Christ, and that this revelation — this name — is now the covenant name under which all of humanity must come to God.

> **Colossians 3:17**
>
> "*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*"

The Apostolic Conviction

> *For the apostles, Jesus was not merely the second person of a Trinity. He was the fullness of God revealed in human form. Every prayer was made in his name. Every baptism was administered in his name. Every confession of faith centered on his identity. He was — and is — Lord of all.*

Chapter Four: Objections Examined

The Oneness doctrine faces several serious objections from Trinitarian theology. This chapter addresses the most significant of them with careful, contextual exegesis. Each objection is stated in its strongest form before being answered.

4.1 Matthew 28:19: "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost"

OBJECTION:

> "*Jesus commanded baptism in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. These are three distinct titles pointing to three distinct persons. This is a Trinitarian text.*"
>
> **ANSWER:** Matthew 28:19 is indeed a Trinitarian-sounding text on its surface. But several observations are necessary for its correct interpretation.

First, notice that Jesus says 'name' — singular, not 'names' plural.

If Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were three separate divine names, the grammatically expected form would be 'in the names' (Greek: onomata, plural). Instead, Jesus uses onoma (singular): 'baptizing them in the name (one name) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' This singular construction indicates that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three titles that converge in one name.

Second, what is that one name? Jesus does not tell us in Matthew 28:19.

But the apostles who received this commission directly from him executed it — consistently and without exception — in the name of Jesus Christ. Every baptism recorded in the book of Acts was administered in Jesus' name (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5). If the apostles understood Jesus' command to require baptism 'in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost' as a formula, they never once used it. They used the name Jesus.

The Oneness interpretation is that Jesus, in Matthew 28:19, was giving the meaning of baptism (in the name that encompasses all three titles — Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) without specifying the name explicitly.

The apostles, who knew the name, executed the command in that name: Jesus Christ. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are not three separate names; they are three titles that describe the one God — Father (the transcendent Creator), Son (the Incarnate Savior), Holy Ghost (the immanent indwelling Spirit) — whose name is Jesus.

Scripture Interprets Scripture

> *The method of Book One applies here: Matthew 28:19 must be read alongside the entire apostolic baptismal record of Acts. When Scripture interprets Scripture, the singular 'name' of Matthew 28:19 is resolved by the consistent apostolic practice of baptizing in the name of Jesus. These are not in conflict. They are complementary.*

4.2 The Baptism of Jesus: Three Persons Simultaneously Present

OBJECTION:

> "*At Jesus' baptism, the Father spoke from heaven, the Son was in the water, and the Holy Spirit descended as a dove. Three persons, simultaneously present, in three different locations. This proves the Trinity.*"
>
> **ANSWER:** The baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:16-17; Mark 1:10-11; Luke 3:21-22) is one of the most commonly cited Trinitarian proof texts. But careful examination reveals that it does not require three co-equal divine persons.

The voice from heaven saying 'This is my beloved Son' is God the Father — the eternal divine nature — confirming the identity of the human vessel he

had taken on. The dove is the Spirit of God descending upon the humanity of Jesus. The person in the water is the Incarnate Son.

But this is not three separate divine persons in three separate locations. It is three manifestations of the one God acting simultaneously in relation to the redemptive work of the Incarnation.

The Father is not a body standing somewhere above the clouds. The Father is the eternal Spirit. The Spirit descending as a dove is the Spirit of God — not a third separate person but the one divine presence expressing itself in a visible sign. The Son in the water is the human nature through which the one God is performing his redemptive work.

Notice also that the voice says 'This is my beloved Son' — not 'This is God the Son, the second person of the Trinity, my co-equal divine peer.' The Father is confirming the Sonship — the humanity, the human vessel, the Incarnate nature of God. This is consistent with the Oneness reading: the eternal God (Father) is confirming his own Incarnation (Son) with the witness of his Spirit (Holy Ghost).

4.3 "God So Loved the World That He Gave His Only Begotten Son"

OBJECTION:

> "*John 3:16 distinguishes God from his Son — if God gave his Son, they must be two separate beings.*"
>
> **ANSWER:** This objection treats the Incarnation language of John 3:16 as if it requires two eternally separate divine persons. But the language of giving and sending, throughout the New Testament, describes the Incarnation — the act by which the one God entered human history in the person of Jesus Christ.

When God 'gave' his Son, he was not handing one divine person over to humanity like a father sending a son on an errand. He was entering human existence himself, taking on human nature, becoming the Son through the virgin birth (Luke 1:35). The Son is not eternally pre-existent as a separate

divine person; the Son is the human nature that God the Father took on at the Incarnation. The Father gave the Son because the Father became the Son — in the same way that a human being who becomes a soldier 'gives' his civilian life to military service.

This reading is consistent with Galatians 4:4-5: 'God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.' God sent forth his Son by becoming the Son — being made of a woman, entering human existence, taking on the form of a servant (Philippians 2:7).

4.4 Stephen's Vision: Jesus Standing at the Right Hand of God

OBJECTION:

> "*Stephen saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:55-56). This proves Jesus and God are two separate beings — one in heaven, one standing beside him.*"
>
> **ANSWER:** The 'right hand of God' is a position of authority, not a spatial location. Throughout Scripture, 'the right hand' is a figure of speech describing supreme power, honor, and dominion (Psalm 110:1; Ephesians 1:20-21; Hebrews 1:3).

God the Father does not have a literal physical right hand — God is Spirit (John 4:24). The right hand of God is not a location in space; it is a description of the supreme position of authority and honor in the universe. When Stephen says he sees the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God, he is describing a vision in which the exaltation and authority of the risen, glorified Christ is made visible to him. He is not describing two physically distinct divine persons standing next to each other.

The language of Psalm 110:1 — 'The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand' — is the same kind of figurative language. The Father's declaration to the Son is not a conversation between two equal divine persons. It is God declaring the supreme authority of the Incarnate Christ — the one through whom all judgment and redemption will be administered.

4.5 The High Priestly Prayer: Jesus Praying to the Father

OBJECTION:

> "*In John 17, Jesus prays to the Father. You cannot pray to yourself. This proves Jesus and the Father are two separate persons.*"
>
> **ANSWER:** This is one of the most natural-sounding objections, and it deserves a careful answer. The Oneness response is that Jesus, in his humanity, genuinely prayed to the Father — and this is exactly what we would expect, given what the Incarnation means.

The Son — the human nature of God — was genuinely dependent on the Father — the divine nature — for everything. The human side of Christ prayed, wept, was hungry, slept, and died. The divine side raised him from the dead, sustained him through the wilderness, and heard his prayers. This is not a contradiction; it is the Incarnation. God became fully human. Full humanity means genuine dependence, genuine prayer, genuine suffering.

If Jesus praying to the Father proved that they were two co-equal separate divine persons, it would also prove that Jesus was not God — because God does not pray to himself in a Trinitarian framework either.

Trinitarian theology handles this by saying Jesus prays to the Father in his human nature, not his divine nature. The Oneness reading makes the same move, but more consistently: the human nature (Son) genuinely addresses the divine nature (Father) in the intimacy of prayer, not because they are two separate persons, but because the Incarnation created a genuine human experience of dependence on God.

On the Prayers of Christ

> *Christ's prayers are the prayers of his humanity to his own divine nature. They are not the prayers of a second divine person to a first. They reveal the depth and reality of the*

> *Incarnation: God truly became a man, and that man truly prayed.*

4.6 "I Can of Mine Own Self Do Nothing" — The Subordination Texts

OBJECTION:

> *"Jesus says he can do nothing of himself (John 5:30), that the Father is greater than he (John 14:28), and that no one knows the hour except the Father (Matthew 24:36). These texts show Jesus is subordinate to the Father, proving they are separate persons."*
>
> **ANSWER:** These texts describe the subordination of the Son — the human nature — to the Father — the divine nature. They are exactly what we would expect if the Incarnation is true. A genuinely human being is dependent, limited, and subordinate. The divine nature is unlimited, all-knowing, and supreme. The subordination texts describe the human side of Christ, not a subordination between two co-equal divine persons.

This is more consistent than the Trinitarian alternative, which must posit an 'eternal subordination of the Son' within the Godhead — a position that has caused enormous controversy within Trinitarian theology itself, since it appears to compromise the co-equality of the persons. The Oneness reading requires no such tension: the Son is subordinate to the Father because the humanity of Christ is genuinely dependent on the divine nature dwelling within him.

Chapter Five: Why This Matters for Everything That Follows

Doctrine does not exist in isolation. Every theological position connects to and shapes every other. The Oneness of God is not a peripheral doctrinal

curiosity — it is the cornerstone of the entire gospel, and every doctrine that follows in this series rests upon it.

5.1 It Determines the Meaning of Baptism

> **Acts 2:38**
>
> "*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.*"

If Jesus Christ is merely the second person of the Trinity — a distinct divine person whose name is one of three divine names — then the apostolic practice of baptizing 'in the name of Jesus Christ' is difficult to explain. Why would the apostles not use the full formula of Matthew 28:19? Why would they consistently use only the name of Jesus?

The Oneness doctrine answers this question directly: the name of Jesus is the one name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. When you invoke the name of Jesus in baptism, you are invoking the full name of the one God.

Baptism in Jesus' name is not a partial obedience to the Great Commission; it is the complete fulfillment of it, as the apostles who received the Commission understood it.

5.2 It Determines the Meaning of Salvation

> **John 8:24**
>
> "*If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.*"

Jesus does not say 'if you do not believe in the Trinity, you will die in your sins.' He says if you do not believe that he is the I AM — the God of Israel, the fullness of the Godhead in human form — you will die in your sins. The correct identification of Jesus Christ is not separable from saving faith. This is not a peripheral theological matter. It is the center of the gospel.

Salvation is found in a Person: the Lord Jesus Christ. Not in a correct formulation about three divine persons. Not in an accurate philosophical

description of divine substance. In the Person whose name is above every name, in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells. The one who calls on that name — correctly understood — shall be saved.

5.3 It Determines the Nature of Prayer

> **John 16:23--24**
>
> "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*"

Prayer in the New Covenant is made to the Father, in the name of Jesus.

This is not a formula — it is a theological reality. We approach the Father through Jesus, because Jesus is the fullness of the Father manifested in human form. The name of Jesus is the access point — the covenant name through which the one God has chosen to be approached in this age. This is why every apostolic prayer in the New Testament is offered in the name of Jesus.

5.4 It Confirms the Sufficiency of the New Birth

The new birth — repentance, baptism in Jesus' name, and the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38) — is not three encounters with three separate divine persons. It is one encounter with the one God: turning from sin (repentance), being buried and raised with him (baptism in his name), and receiving his Spirit (the gift of the Holy Ghost). The Oneness doctrine unifies the new birth as a single transaction with the single God who is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost — all in Jesus Christ.

5.5 The Stakes

> **John 8:24**

> *"If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."*

Christ's words are not a threat; they are a warning born of compassion.

The identity of Jesus is not a secondary matter on which sincere people may agree to disagree. It is the foundation. Built rightly, everything else stands. Built wrong, everything else is at risk.

This is why Book Two comes before the books on salvation, baptism, and the Holy Ghost. You cannot correctly understand what you are obeying in Acts 2:38 until you understand who is commanding it. You cannot correctly understand what name you are invoking in baptism until you understand whose name it is. You cannot fully appreciate the gift of the Holy Ghost until you understand that the Spirit you are receiving is the Spirit of the one God — Father, Son, and Holy Ghost — fully dwelling in you through Jesus Christ.

The Foundation Stated

> *One God. Fully expressed in Jesus Christ. Father in creation, Son in redemption, Holy Ghost in regeneration. Not three persons. One God, three manifestations. And in Jesus Christ — his name, his blood, his Spirit — the complete provision of salvation is found.*

Chapter Six: Key Terms and Technical Reference

6.1 Hebrew Terms

> ***Echad (אחד) —*** one — used of God in Deuteronomy 6:4; can describe composite unity but in context asserts singularity
>
> ***Yachid (יחיד) —*** sole, only, unique — used of Isaac as Abraham's only son; NOT used of God in the Shema
>
> ***El (אל) —*** God, the Mighty One — the generic Hebrew word for God; used of YHWH and assigned to Jesus in Isaiah 9:6

El Gibbor (אל גבור) — Mighty God — title assigned to the child to be born in Isaiah 9:6; a title of the God of Israel

Abi-Ad (אבי עד) — Everlasting Father, Father of eternity — also assigned to Jesus in Isaiah 9:6

YHWH (יהוה) — the covenant name of God, the I AM — translated LORD in the KJV; the name Jesus identifies himself with in John 8:58

Shema (שמע) — hear, listen — the opening word of Deuteronomy 6:4, giving the confession its name

6.2 Greek Terms

Theotes (θεότης) — the divine nature itself, divinity in the fullest sense — used in Colossians 2:9; distinct from theiotes

Theiotes (θειότης) — divine quality, divine characteristic — used in Romans 1:20; weaker than theotes

Pleroma (πλήρωμα) — fullness, completeness, the full measure — used in Colossians 2:9 and 1:19

Logos (λόγος) — word, reason, rational principle — used in John 1:1 for the pre-existent self-expression of God

Monogenes (μονογενής) — only-begotten, unique — used of Jesus in John 3:16; refers to the uniqueness of the Incarnation

Onoma (ὄνομα) — name — singular in Matthew 28:19; one name encompasses Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

Ego eimi (ἐγώ εἰμι) — I am — Jesus' self-designation in John 8:58; the Greek rendering of the divine name of Exodus 3:14

Hen (ἓν) — one — neuter form used in John 10:30; describes essential unity of Father and Son

Homologoumenos (ὁμολογουμένως) — by common confession, without controversy — used in 1 Timothy 3:16 to describe the Incarnation as universally acknowledged

Somatikos (σωματικῶς) — bodily, in a bodily manner — used in Colossians 2:9; the fullness of God dwells in Christ in physical form

6.3 Historical Context

The Council of Nicaea (325 AD)

The formal doctrine of the Trinity was not settled by the apostolic writings. It was debated across three centuries of church history and formally codified at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, called by Emperor Constantine to resolve the Arian controversy. The Nicene Creed established that the Son was 'of one substance' (homoousios) with the Father — coequal and co-eternal. The Council of Constantinople (381 AD) extended this to the Holy Spirit.

Oneness Pentecostalism, and earlier Apostolic movements, represent a tradition that contends the Nicene formulation went beyond what Scripture teaches — introducing philosophical categories (Greek ousia, hypostasis) that the apostolic writings do not use, and producing a doctrine that is not straightforwardly derivable from the text. This is not a recent argument; it echoes controversies that were present in the earliest centuries of the church.

The Sabellian Controversy

Oneness theology is sometimes accused of being a revival of Sabellianism, the teaching of Sabellius (third century) that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are simply three different modes or masks of the same God, with no real distinction. There are similarities, but important differences. Sabellius denied any real distinction between Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Oneness theology affirms a real distinction between the divine nature (Father) and

the human nature (Son), as well as the real indwelling presence of the Spirit — while insisting that these are not three separate divine persons but three modes of the self-revelation of the one God.

The Apostolic Tradition

The consistent practice of baptism in Jesus' name in the book of Acts reflects the apostolic understanding of Matthew 28:19. There is no record in the New Testament of the triadic formula 'Father, Son, and Holy Ghost' being used as a baptismal formula. The Didache (an early second-century Christian document) does mention baptism 'in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,' suggesting the formula had emerged by that point. But the New Testament record itself is uniformly in the name of Jesus. The apostolic church baptized in Jesus' name.

Chapter Seven: Study Guide and Review Questions

Chapter One — The Absolute Unity of God

1. In your own words, what does the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4) declare about God? Why was this confession foundational to Israel's identity?
2. How does the argument that echad implies composite unity work? How does the broader Old Testament context respond to this argument?
3. What is the significance of the word yachid? Why is its non-use in the Shema relevant to the Oneness/Trinity debate?
4. Read Isaiah 44:6-8, Isaiah 45:5, and Isaiah 46:9. What common theme runs through all three? What do they collectively declare about the nature of God?
5. (Advanced) How does 1 Timothy 3:16 describe the 'mystery of godliness'? What is the mystery — and what is NOT the mystery according to this text?

Chapter Two — The Fullness of God in Christ

6. What does the Greek word theotes mean in Colossians 2:9? How does it differ from theiotes? Why does Paul's word choice matter?
7. What does pleroma mean? When Paul says 'all the fullness' dwells in Christ, what is he claiming about Jesus in relation to God?
8. In John 1:1-14, what does 'the Word' (Logos) refer to? What is the theological significance of the Word 'becoming flesh'?
9. How does the Oneness doctrine describe the Father-Son relationship? What texts support this understanding?
10. (Advanced) How is the Logos concept understood in Jewish theology (Philo) and Greek philosophy (Stoicism)? How does John's use of Logos address both audiences while declaring something neither had anticipated?

Chapter Three — The Identity of Jesus Christ

11. Isaiah 9:6 assigns which titles to the child to be born? Which of these titles is most difficult for Trinitarian theology to explain, and why?
12. What is the grammatical significance of Jesus saying 'I am' (rather than 'I was') in John 8:58? What did the audience understand him to be claiming?
13. What does John 14:9 reveal about the relationship between Jesus and the Father? How does this passage challenge the idea that the Father and Son are eternally distinct persons?
14. Why is the singular 'name' in Matthew 28:19 significant? What does the apostolic baptismal record of Acts tell us about what that one name is?

Chapter Four — Objections Examined

15. How does the Oneness doctrine explain the baptism of Jesus, where the Father, Son, and Spirit all appear to be simultaneously present?

16. What is the Oneness response to the argument that Jesus praying to the Father proves they are two separate persons?
17. How does the Oneness reading handle the 'subordination texts' (John 5:30; John 14:28; Matthew 24:36)?
18. (Advanced) Compare the Oneness reading of Matthew 28:19 with Acts 2:38. How do these two texts relate to each other? What does the apostolic practice of baptism in Jesus' name tell us about the apostles' understanding of the Great Commission?

Chapter Five — Why This Matters

19. How does the Oneness doctrine affect the meaning and practice of baptism in Jesus' name?
20. Jesus says in John 8:24 that disbelieving his identity leads to dying in sins. What does this imply about the importance of correct Christology for salvation?
21. In what sense does the Oneness of God 'unify' the new birth experience of Acts 2:38?
22. (Advanced) How would you explain the Oneness doctrine to a Trinitarian believer who is open to examining the question? What texts would you start with, and why?

A Closing Word

The identity of Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of the entire gospel.

Every doctrine, every sacrament, every prayer, and every promise of God converges on this one Person: the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

This is not a doctrine invented by theological sophistication. It is the plain testimony of Moses, Isaiah, John, Paul, and Peter — and above all, of Jesus himself. He said it: before Abraham was, I am. He said it: I and the Father are one. He said it: if you have seen me, you have seen the Father. The task of the student is not to explain away these statements. It is to receive them.

The church that correctly identifies its Lord will correctly administer his commands. Baptism will be in his name. Prayer will be in his name.

The Spirit given will be his Spirit. Every transaction with God — from conversion to glorification — will be grounded in the Person whose name is above every name: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever (Hebrews 13:8).

> **Colossians 2:9--10**
>
> "*For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.*"

Continue to Book Three:

The Problem of Sin and the Function of the Law